Alatheus

(fl. c. 376 – c. 387)

BRIEFING

Alatheus was a Greuthungi chieftain who served as a co-regent for Vithericus, son and heir of the Gothic Vithimiris

BIOGRAPHY

Alatheus (fl. 376–387) was a chieftain of the Greuthungi. He fought during the Hunnish invasion of 376, engaged in war with Rome from 376 to 383, and incursions into the Balkans in 387. He is most famous for his participation at the Battle of Adrianople in 378.

After the death of the Gothic King Vithimiris while fighting against the Huns in 376, Alatheus became, with Saphrax, co-regent and guardian of Vithericus, infant son of Vithimiris. He helped in the leadership of the great Gothic migration before the Hun onslaught, he crossed the Danube while Rome was busy with Thervingi refugees in that year. He soon allied himself with the Thervingi leaders Fritigern and Alavivus against Rome.

Alatheus eluded the Romans and rampaged through Thrace and Moesia in 377–378. He marched to Fritigern's aid against Emperor Valens at the battle of Adrianople in 378, in which Valens was killed when Alatheus' forces were victorious. He continued to raid Thrace and northern Greece, but was defeated by Theodosius the Great's general Promotus, and he settled on the north side of the Danube. He appeared on its banks again in 386, with the intention of invading the Roman provinces again. His forces were, however, repulsed, and Alatheus was slain.